

### Postmortem Testing

- Postmortem antibody testing IS NOT available through the state lab.
- If you have a strong suspicion of novel coronavirus infection, contact the Tennessee Department of Health at 615-741-7247 to request testing. Postmortem PCR testing IS available and is the same process used to test the living. County medical examiners may also be able to coordinate postmortem testing through their local health departments (contact information [here](#)).
  - If you need specimen collection materials contact your local health department.
  - The instructions for specimen submission to the State PH Laboratory can be found [here](#).
- Criteria for post-mortem testing through the state lab include:
  - Otherwise unexplained fever, chills, rigors, myalgias, changes in taste or smell, cough, shortness of breath, or close contact (defined as  $\leq$ six feet or less for  $\geq$ ten minutes without personal protective equipment) with a confirmed COVID-19 case in the past 14 days.
  - Postmortem interval should be less than three days.
- It is NOT recommended that all decedents be tested for the virus that causes COVID-19.

### Handling a Decedent

- The recommended personal protective equipment (PPE) consists of:
  - Gown, eye protection, face mask (N95 respirator is NOT necessary), gloves
- Hospitals should be encouraged to remove and appropriately discard endotracheal, nasogastric/orogastric tubes, and urinary catheters.
- The body should be placed in a sturdy body bag and the outside of the body bag disinfected. A list of EPA-approved disinfectants can be found [here](#).
- There is no need to disinfect the body.

### Death Certification

- “COVID-19” should be included in Part I of the death certificate if death was felt to be due to novel coronavirus infection.
- “Presumed” or “likely” or “probable” may be used in cases in which testing was not performed, but there is a strong clinical suspicion that death was due to novel coronavirus infection.
- If test results are pending at the time of death certification, indicate in cause of death statement.
- More details on certification of COVID-19 deaths can be found [here](#).

### Other Resources

- National guidelines for funeral home workers can be found [here](#).
- WHO guidelines for handling deceased bodies infected with novel coronavirus can be found [here](#).
- Tennessee guidelines for funeral homes can be found [here](#). Funeral homes should bear in mind that some municipalities and counties may have more restrictive gathering policies.